

## A Short Visit to Mt. Etna in 1976

By ANTHONY VALLETTA, F.R.E.S.\*

Once more, this summer I paid a short visit to Sicily from the 14th to the 21st July hoping to come across species of butterflies which I did not take before from this nearby island. This time I was accompanied by a young collector, Guido Bonett, still in his 'teens who so far had not collected abroad. This trip was an enjoyable experience for him, so much so, that his first capture was a *Pyronia cecilia arminii* Stdgr. — a gynandromorph.

We left Malta by air and as we arrived in the early afternoon there was no chance of going out. The following day, joined by Sig. Sebastiano Distefano, a faithful and helpful friend, we drove up to 1,500 metres on Mt. Etna, beyond Zafferana. *Melanargia galathea* L. was out in full force, *P. cecilia*, mostly males, was just emerging. *Pararge aegeria* L., *P. megera* L., and *Mariola jurtina hispulla* Esp., were also on the wing but in a smaller number, and *Brintesia circe* F. was taken for the first time. Several *Mellicta athalia* Rott., *B. daphne* and *Melitaea didyma meridionalis* Stgr. were noticed. *Limenitis reducta* Stgr. was the second new species encountered, followed by *Thecla betulae* L. The usual Lycaenids, *Polyommatus icarus* Rott., *Lycaena phlaeas* L., *Aricia agestis* L. were very common but only two *Celastrina argiolus* L. were seen. Of the Pierids few species were noticed and in small numbers, viz. *Leptidea sinapis sartha* Ruhl., *Pieris rapae* L. and *Gonepteryx cleopatra* L. and that was all for the day.

On the 16th we took the coach to Mt. Etna and started collecting from an altitude of 1,600 metres downwards. Again *M. galathea* out-numbered all other species; the other Satyrids taken the previous day were also on the wing, including *Coenonympha pamphilus* L. and only one specimen of *Hipparchia semele blachieri* Fruhst. was seen. *Chazara briseis* L. and *Hipparchia fagi* Scop., which were so very common last summer in the same locality, were conspicuous by their absence; this may be as last year, it was a week later and the weather this year was still unsettled. Two *Papilio machaon* L. were seen, *Boloria euphrosyne* L., *Cynthia cardui* L., *Colias crocea* Geoffroy and *Pieris napi* L. were singled out. *Heodes alciphron* Rott. and *Callophrys rubi* L. were just emerging. *Thymelicus lineola* Ochs., *Ochlodes venata* Turati and *Pyrgus malvoides* Elw. & Edw. were quite common.

On the 17th, Distefano drove us to Pedara, 1,200 metres. This is a much cultivated area and we collected in the winding lanes where the flora was still at its best. Here we came across *Argynnis paphia* L. and again *M. athalia*. Interesting captures were *Nymphalis polychloros* L. and *Aglais urticae* L. — these two species are not so common in Sicily. Again *L. reducta* was seen. Of the Pierids, *Pontia daplidice* L. was added. It is to be noted that in this area *B. circe* was plentiful, flying very fast between the rows of the grapevines. An additional species was *Libythea celtis* Laicharting.

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On the 19th we again went up Mt. Etna, 1,400 metres; all the species met with the previous visit were again seen, plus *Aporia crataegi* L., *Iphiclides podalirius* Scop. and another specimen of *H. semele*. The last day of collecting, the 20th, was spent at Bronte, 1,000 metres on the west side of Mt. Etna. Here the most common butterflies were *P. daplidice*, *C. crocea*, *C. cardui* and *B. circe*. A huge specimen of *L. reducta* and a couple of *P. machaon* were taken. We have noticed a decline in the number of *P. brassicae* as only a few specimens were seen, when formerly this was considered the most common butterfly; other common butterflies, *Vanessa atalanta* L., *Lampides boeticus* L. and *Syntarucus perithous* L., were not met with. The only moths taken by day were: *Tyria jacobaeae* L., *Camptogramma bilineata* L., *Rhodostropha vibicaria* Clerck var. *strigata* Stgr. (larva feeds on the *Genista aetnensis*), *Hemistola chrysoprasaria* Esp. and *Plusia gamma* L. Feeding on *Achillea tomentosa*, a variety of *Procris statices* L., and *Zygaena purpuralis poligalae* Esp. were fairly common. An interesting insect, *Ascalafus longicornus* (Ascalaphidae — Neuroptera) was met in the different localities.

On Sunday, the 20th, we did not go out collecting, but in the evening spent an hour collecting with mercury vapour lamp on the terrace of a villa at Viagrande, at a height of 1,000 m. on the slopes of Mt. Etna. The surrounding and lower slopes were under cultivation, mostly citrus, olive and apple trees. From the limited catch, one can say that there was much spraying being done. The following species of moths came to the light: *Agrotis trux* Hb., *A. saucia* Hb., *A. hyperici* F., *A. leucogaster* Freyer, *Cryphia perla* F., *Dicestra trifolii* Hufn., *Plusia gamma* L., *P. ni* Hb., *P. chalcites* Esp., *Phra. fuliginosa* L., *Orphiuche lividalis* Hb., *Eucrostes indignata* Vill., *Scopula imitaria* Hübn., *Idaea determinata* Stgr., *Scopula minorata* H.-S., *Idaea seriata* Schrank, *Id. vulpinaria* Schiff., *Id. attenuaria* Rbr., *Gymnoscelis pumilata* Hübn., *Rhodometra sacraria* L., *Oxybia transversella* Dup., *Rhodophaea legatella* Hübn., *Ulotricha egregialis* H.-S., *Hypotia corticalis* D. & S., *Duponchelia fovealis* Z., *Palpita unionalis* Hübn., *Nomophila noctuella* D. & S., *Uresiphita polygonalis* Hübn., *Udea ferrugalis* Hübn., *Pyrausta sanguinalis* L., *Cacoecimorpha pronubana* Hübn., *Pelochrista agrestana* Tr., *Cydia pomonella* Z., and *Stenoptilis pterodactyla* L.

The following is a list of the Rhopalocera noticed: *P. machaon sphyrus* Hübn., *I. podalirius* L., *P. brassicae* L., *P. rapae*, *P. napi meridionalis* Heyne, *P. daplidice* L., *L. sinapis sartha* Ruhl., *C. crocea* Fourc., *G. cleopatra* L., *C. cardui* L., *A. urticae opima* Vty., *N. polychloros* L., *M. didyma meridionalis* Stgr., *A. paphia* L., *Cl. euphrosyne* L., *M. athalia* Rott., *B. daphnae* D. & S., *P. icarus* Rott., *L. argiolus* L., *L. phlaeas* L., *H. alciphron aetnea* Turati, *H. agestis* D. & S., *T. betulae* L., *C. rubi* L., *P. aegeria sardoa* Vty., *P. megera australis* Vty., *M. jurtina hispulla* Esp., *C. pamphilus* L., *H. semele blachieri* Fruhst., *P. cecilia arminii* Stgr., *A. galathea*

L., *B. circe* Fab., *P. malvoides* Elw. & Edw., *A. lineola clara* Tutt., *O. venata esperi* Vty., *H. comma* L., and *Libythea celtis* L.

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### Reference

Valletta, A., 1976. Collecting Lepidoptera and Other Insects in Sicily in 1975. *Ent. Rec.*, 88: 113-118.

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PTEROSTICHUS KUGELANNI PANZ. (COL.: CARABIDAE) IN CORNWALL AND S. DEVON. — This colourful ground-beetle (= *P. dimidiatus* Ol.), an erstwhile denizen of such suburban localities as Hampstead Heath and Wandsworth Common, is now much rarer than formerly, and chiefly taken at irregular intervals in certain heathy parts of the New Forest—last in some numbers in 1970. I have seen no published record of its occurrence as far west as Cornwall, the nearest being for Saunton, N. Devon (Champion) and Bovey Potteries, S. Devon (Woollatt); the latter of these is probably new for the vice-county (1 ex., 28.iv.56). It is of interest, therefore, to report that the late Philip Harwood appears to have taken *P. kugelanni* at Cubert, E. Cornwall, in April 1911, as I have a specimen from his duplicates so labelled. — A. A. ALLEN.

A NOTE ON REARING PTYCHOLOMOIDES AERIFERANUS (H.-S.) (LEP.: TORTRICIDAE). — On 2nd July this year I was visiting Andrews Wood and Meenfield Woods in N.W. Kent—an area scheduled for devastation by the new M.25 Motorway link—when I noticed some fairly inconspicuous spinnings on the branches of Larch (*Larix decidua* Mill.). They were some 2 metres from ground level, each spinning being confined to one “tuft” of needles. All those examined were empty but, ever hopeful, a number were consigned to a plastic bag and forgotten. On 14th July the bag was examined and found to contain two *aeriferanus*. The moth was also noted at m.v. in the same woods on 22nd July.

This moth has become quite widespread since its discovery in Kent by Dr. E. Scott in 1952, but the only published account of finding the feral larva in this country appears to be by Styles (*Entomologist*, 88: 82) who found the larvae in Norfolk on 18th June, 1951 feeding “between larch needles”. He also states that pupation occurs within the spinnings, an observation which I cannot confirm, as all the spinnings I examined were empty! Wakely (*Entomologist*, 86: 302; 88: 141) suggests that *aeriferanus* may also feed beneath the bark of Larch or Norway Maple.

Perhaps other entomologists could be persuaded to publish their observations on the biology of this species? — P. A. SOKOLOFF, 4 Steep Close, Green St. Green, Orpington, Kent.